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Conceptualising ‘Communication’ in Environmental Communication Campaigns

– Shedding new light on common traditions

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Abstract

This paper examines how practitioners of environmental communication campaigns (ECCs) conceptualize communication. Through interviews I investigate the practitioners' way of understanding communication by looking at the metaphors they use to describe it. The interviews clearly show that communication is mainly conceptualised as a transmission of messages. The problem of communication hence becomes a challenge of de-fragmenting messages through the search for media channels with low distortion. Contrasting the transmission view with another perspective such as symbolic interactionism sheds new light on how communicative activities can be interpreted and observed in order to bring awareness to new aspects of what happens in communication. For instance, communicative activities such as dialogical situations might reveal valuable insights about how participants actively shape and negotiate meaning.

Keywords: Environmental Communication, Meta-discourse, NGOs, Transmission, Symbolic Interactionism

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1 Introduction

A majority of the research community are unanimous regarding the facts about Climate change (IPCC, 2014). Human activity has a significant impact upon the heating of the worlds average temperature increasing risks for floods/ droughts, health degradation and further marginalisation of the poor to mention just a few of the alarming consequences (Environmental Health Perspectives, 1995; Ibid).

Environmental NGOs play a vital part in the ratification of environmental policies at an intergovernmental level in the developed part of the world (Dolšak, 2013). NGOs also makes a significant effort, spending millions of dollars campaigning every year in the US alone in order to influence peoples' everyday decisions (Mooney, 2014, Sullivan, 2013). Alongside NGOs there are examples of municipal organizations as well, making substantial efforts to carry out environmental campaign work aiming to impact individual behaviour (Hedenvind, 2015).

Environmental communication campaigns (ECCs) can be defined as a strategically designed communication activity meant to inform and/ or persuade a target group regarding environmental impact. (Norton & Grecu p. 355). ECCs with an emphasis on behavioural theory, knowledge distribution and attitude change (Hansmann et al., 2015; Jickling, 2003; Crompton, 2009; de-Shalit, 2001 etc) might be seen as, partially due to the large increase of NGOs the past decades (Mitchell et al, 1991), a response to a widespread inability to cope with the environmental issues faced by modern society on a systemic level.

These campaigns might also be seen as a response to the political system. A system that seems to favour democracy where peoples' behaviour is not commonly enforced. Considering the issues humanity face in terms of environmental degradation (IPCC, 2014), in the light of this it is clear that the pursuit of 'free will' has not rendered man as a rational utilitarian being in terms of the collective good. Instead 'individualism' seems to prevail now more than ever before in human history (Beck, 2002). Many governments even praise the importance of human rights to choose freely (Wilby, 1996), putting much of the responsibility upon individual choice. It has been debated whether the issue should be tackled through having governments implement pro-environmental policy changes, but some claim change can only be brought by the engagement through the peoples' movement (Hart, 2010). Here is where ECCs come in, as an effort to influence the progress of our climate. It is likely that the way ECCs are planned is the result of a number of assumptions, yet little knowledge has been generated in relation to what these basic assumptions are. Since ECCs are about 'communication', one can argue that there is a direct link between the practitioners' conceptualisations about communication, and ECC design. This means that these conceptualisations of communication are of essential importance to the management of ECCs. Which ultimately are supposed to contribute to the solutions to environmental issues. Society including governments have yet to prove that they can manage the situation through policies, hence expectations of what ECCs should accomplish are high and rightfully so. Due to the high expectations of ECCs, and the responsibility they have as a means for change, I argue in this paper, that there is a need for investigating further what essential assumptions lies behind ECC design.

2 Research problem

The assumptions people make are likely to influence what options they have readily available to them when they make choices. Hence it is plausible that ECC practitioners' assumptions of communication, influence the way they design ECCs. This makes assumptions an interesting and highly valuable area of study. Many studies on ECCs in the past have an emphasis on how to 'adopt effective communication strategies' (Bortree et al. 2012) as a response to pro-environmental action (Hansen & Cox, 2015). In contrast, scholars such as Brulle (2010) critique what he perceives as an overemphasis on creating effective messages based on psychological cognitive science in the literature. Among others (Geddes, 2007; Vercelli et al., 2014) Brulle (2010) argues that public dialogue is of key importance for social change. Few studies of campaigns have had their focus on the internal rationale and assumptions made in the organizations making campaigns (Hansen & Cox, 2015). This study will attempt to peek into the world of ECCs to understand how communication is conceptualized and potentially shed new light on the process of their design and execution.

In theorizing communication one must actively reflect upon questions of this type: what are the things one takes for granted, how are theories constructed and used? This demands a reflection on the role of theory, thus meta-theory (Craig & Muller, 2007). How theory is understood depends on our view of reality, our ideas about how to put a theory into practise, what values underlies our theory and how it should contribute to society. Without preconceived ideas about what, in our case communication theory is, one cannot theorize about it. Every theory holds meta-theoretical assumptions which forms the ground for argumentation and validation of that theory (Craig 2007). To make an example, behavioural theory studies human behaviour with the meta-theoretical assumptions that human beings are first and foremost cognitive beings. This leads one to study how human cognition works. In other words, as Craig (2007) puts it, humans base their actions upon their understanding of what they do and what others are doing. Thus in order to expand our understanding of communication, it can be useful to study how belonging to a particular school of thought or a group of communicators, form and determine the way communication is conceptualised and executed in ECCs. It might be a good point in time to pause and reflect on the everyday practises we take for granted and categorize them into different understandings of communication since its origins are many and its ideals multifaceted. The purpose according to Craig (2007), of such a categorization would be to bring clarity and potentially make intellectual and social contributions to our understanding of ECCs. After all, the purpose of this thesis is to contribute to the good of society. By shedding light on fundamental assumptions about communication, one might make clear the challenges one faces depending on what view you have.

ECC design and execution is expected in this paper to be dependent on the way practitioners who plan them think, talk or conceptualize about communication and its purpose. If we want to understand the conditions upon which ECCs are founded, we should hence attempt to study these concepts. Through such a process I argue that valuable aspects of communication can be revealed which enables one to discuss the consequences of having

particular perceptions of what communication is and should do, as well as to enable one to problematize and shed new light on the discourse of ECC design and execution.

In motivating the design of this study, I have assumed that practitioners within the field of ECC design, belong to a common 'school of practise', that is that they share similar properties in how they relate to designing and executing campaigns, regardless of how they organisationally relate to each other. There might be differences as to how different NGOs take advantage of or are aided by out-sourced, pure communication-agencies, but one point of departure in this study is that all studied NGOs share properties in relation to how they make sense of communication. If there are clear distinctions these will of course be addressed, but the intention is not to look for these, rather to describe the field as a common.

3 Aim

The purpose of this essay is to study how people involved in the design and execution of Environmental Communication Campaigns conceptualize about communication. By investigating these concepts this study will look at how communication activities are validated and attributed meaning based on predisposed assumptions, as well as to reveal how some design choices become visible while other remain hidden subjective to the view on communication.

3.1 Research Questions

- **Q1:** How is ‘communication’ conceptualised in the design and execution of Environmental Communication Campaigns?
- **Q2:** How is the relation described between the participants in Environmental Communication Campaigns?

4 Method

4.1 Research design

In order to collect data on how conceptualizations are made about communication in ECCs, this study centres around interviewing practitioners of campaign design, listening to how they talk about communication both as a general phenomenon and specifically related to their campaign design process. The choice to look at interview situations as an object of study assumes two things, (I) conceptualizations/ meta discourse about communication is influencing the way ECCs are designed and executed and (II), these conceptualizations may be revealed in the interview situations themselves which makes it possible to study, making the interview situations valuable and interesting. These two assumptions are founded on a social constructionist view on communication, that the interactions with the interviewees reveals how actors from a dialectical perspective actively define their situation and their understanding as well as their conceptualization of communication in ECC design and execution.

During the early spring of 2016, eleven semi-structured interviews were held and recorded with communicators, communication managers, project managers and digital content designers working in some of Sweden's largest (based on members) environmental NGOs (eNGOs), namely: WWF, Naturskyddsföreningen, Greenpeace, Jordens Vänner (Friends of the Earth) and Håll Sverige Rent. These campaign practitioners involved in the designing and implementation of ECCs were asked about the process of planning campaigns, what communication activities they choose, how they know if they have done a good job, what challenges they face and what their dream communication project would look like. In addition to that they were asked questions like 'why do you consider this or that to be important?' and 'what made you go with that kind of activity?' etc. in order to follow up on and attempt to discover underlying concepts and interpretations of communication. All recordings were transcribed verbatim, although excluding nonverbal gestures and conversational validations by the interviewer such as 'mm', 'yes', 'ok' and 'I see'. Sentences for further analysis were selected based on describing (I) communication activities, (II) the conceptualization of communication, (III) motivation and (IV) challenges. I selected a total of 52 quotes which were studied by trying to find out definitions of communication as well as how roles are attributed to the participants of communication. Data will consequently be analysed using the above frameworks and categorized based upon emergent themes, in a sense a hermeneutical approach where one presumes that discourse becomes visible through language use, that the way we talk about a phenomenon is a reflection of how we understand it, what we hold as true and what defines that phenomena as well as where the boundaries are.

4.2 Reflections about methodology

There are many ways to study how campaigns are designed. One way would have been to do an ethnographical study, participate in and observe planning sessions with practitioners as well as real campaigning events. Due to practical matters such as the issue of getting access, time constraints as well as the fact that it is difficult to study people sitting at their desks, thinking about how to come up with a design, I chose a different path forward. In this study I chose to talk with people involved in the process of campaign design, so in a way one could say a study of the practitioners' meta-discourse about communication. The communicative activities are not being played out in real time for one to study, rather this paper is about studying an abstraction of reality. I will not be interpreting how the interaction with the interviewees unfold in themselves, but the description of communication as a concept.

As I attempted to listen to the interviewees ways of talking about communication, I had to pay special attention to the way I went about performing my interviews. Firstly, the questions had to be reviewed in terms of implicit meaning, what is it the questions themselves imply and how does that potentially guide/ direct the interviewees attention and perspective? The questions had to be actively formulated with that in mind, trying to get away from inducing definitions of communication in the way they were asked. Secondly since this was an open inquiry it became very much an active reflection over reflection. It was a challenge while interviewing to stay neutral and aware of how I followed up on things they said, for instance through mirroring the interviewees definitions. To clarify, one can either ask 'what channels do you use for your communication' –which would imply a transmission view on communication, or one can ask 'you mentioned that the channel X was important, what did you mean by that?', this first mirrors the respondents own words, followed up with an open question which is open for interpretation for the respondent. In some cases, this kind of interviewing felt rather absurd, and at a few occasions I did discover after I posted a follow up question, that I had implied a certain definition myself, leading me at times, to rephrase the question. The third challenge was to balance between guiding the interviewees through my questioning, yet still allowing them to formulate the process of i.e. building a campaign or communication activity. The effort to stay constantly aware also led to a desire to guide the interviews in a certain direction so that I would be able to discover pre-conceived ideas and assumptions that I myself had about those particular organisations and campaign communication as a phenomenon. It goes without saying that researchers are never objective in their inquiry, one must always start from somewhere, and that is where you are, and where you are, is dependent upon a vast number of conditions. So indeed it was a challenge, and as a personal critique I would add that going about a study of this type is not without scruples, my own predisposition was obviously one of SI which will be dealt with later, which primed me to look for particular utterances, post follow up questions about particular things etc. In the end, it is all a matter of perspective.

As an additional remark, here is a paragraph for clarity. Obviously all of the interviewed organizations are great at what they do, otherwise they would not be having so many members and such large influence, it would be irrational to question that. However, looking at the meta-discourse might bring about new aspects of communication which are valuable for contemplation.

5 Theory

Environmental Communication (EC) rests traditionally upon formulating relevant content, finding an audience and finding means for distributing a message, as a means for persuading individuals to act in a particular way (Cox & Schwarzee, 2015). This definition of EC is likely to be reproduced in the way practitioners of EC talk about communication in ECC activities and planning. The aim of this study is to investigate conceptualisations of communication among professionals working with ECC design. In order to develop a sensitivity for the variety of different ways of conceptualising communication, this paper will discuss the tensions between two fundamentally different communication theories, here labelled as Transmission of messages respective co-construction of meaning.

5.1 Transmission

One might say that the predominant view on communication dates back several centuries, even millennia to the old antique Greece, however we only have to go as far back as to the beginning of western industrialization to understand how communication is today commonly theorized. Communication as a scientific field of study is relatively new (Craig, 1999), in the 19th century transportation infrastructure became the foundation for the success of industrial development, one would speak of communication as a means of getting goods from point A to point B through constructing trains and railways that were to carry it across vast distances (Schön, 1982). Even today we speak of public transport or public communications in tandem with communication as something about interaction between human beings and the world.

The cybernetic theory originates from the transmission view, its purpose is studying messages as a means for controlling systems in either machine or societal contexts (Wiener 1949). In order to rationalize telecommunications, Shannon & Weaver (1954) developed a model for understanding transmissions as being between a sender and receiver and thought this same model could be used for understanding human communication as well. Although not originally designated to understand planning processes the cybernetic tradition has become integrated to and laid the foundation for the development of modern concepts of strategic communication practises as well as communication planning in works by de-Fleur (1970) and Jurin, Roush and Danter (2010) and is the foundation of modern PR and marketing practises (Peattie, 1992). The original purpose of the model was to describe message transfer, where you would have a sender and receiver separated by noise, depending on the channel quality (originally on the phone line), meaning you would have other channels for redundancy to get the message through to the other side (Craig & Muller, 2007). Noise is conceptualized as the factors obstructing the message to get across, hindering the receivers' ability to interpret or decode the message, which ultimately constitutes the meaning of the message to the receiver. The message once received is assumed to have an influence on the receiver, who then is supposed to give feedback on that message. The messages themselves are theorized as packages of data or information

that are co-sent with instructions on how to read/ make sense of the data (Watzlawick, Beaving & Jackson, 1967). To summarize, whether or not the receiver is influenced by the message or not is theorized as dependent on the amount of redundancy available to compensate for the present noise.

5.2 Symbolic interactionism

Symbolic interactionism (SI) is as much a view on communication as a perspective on society and humans. It is centred around five key ideas. (I) humans are social beings, our actions are determined by our lifelong social interactions. (II) 'The human must be understood as a thinking being', interaction does not only occur between individuals but also within the individual, we are not only a product of conditioning, to our social context but we also have a sense of agency, thinking may be more or less conscious but nevertheless is there. (III) Humans do not sense reality directly, rather it is our definition of it that is important, definitions may be influenced by past, present and future as well as other peoples' intentions. (IV) 'the cause of human action is the result of what is occurring in our present situation', this means cause is actively being shaped in the present situation, this includes social interaction, definition and thinking, which can of course be influenced in turn by i.e. past events, but the importance here is that causes are actively being shaped in the present interactions, what is going on within an individual in the present. (V), 'Human beings are active beings in relation to their environment', humans are not thought of as passive, context confined beings, rather have agency and are actively involved in what we do. Ultimately one would say we are in charge of our own actions by a constant decision making, valuing and consideration and are thus responsible for our actions (Charon, 2009). This active component is of key importance to the understanding of the symbolic interactionists take on human life, the world in itself is considered value neutral, the world does not 'reach out' so to speak, rather it is humans that 'decide what to do with it'. In looking at a flower there is interpretation, judgment and thinking, making sense of the flower, it is not simply raw data that we respond to. Drawing from a pragmatist approach, the human is considered in a way not as a fixed and stable entity, but an ever changing, dynamic being, always in the process of becoming, this means society is always in a constant flux as well (ibid). The idea that all participants of communication are actively contributing to a situation, challenges the transmission paradigm in where only the sender is thought of as active, and the receiver is seen more like a cognitive social being. From this perspective one could try to affect someone by trying to understand the human brain. SI on the contrary, does not reduce humans to just cognitive beings, but takes into account the ongoing interaction right here, right now. Every interaction brings meaning to the situation, not simply previous conditioning, societal structures etc. Communication in SI is an active meaning-making, as I talk to you, you make sense of what I say and bring meaning to the words as we speak, it is an active process, if you were simply a passive receiver, that would mean you would not actively define the situation through thinking. A good understanding of SI can be borrowed from Shibutani (in ibid), he describes the causes for action not as the personalities we have, not our attitudes, not society or culture and not perspective either, rather that an active thinking human being can be aware of and use these things as a guide for action in the present, but is not enslaved by them, not passively guided by them automatically, the human individual has a choice, perspective is seen more as a 'tool in the hands of an active defining actor'. So perspective is something that is being used, actively as a guide for action. Social interaction creates a reference group, that in turn creates a perspective which can be used by the individual to define a situation that in turn leads to action which again affects the individuals' perspective and their definition that in turn influences continuous action. Basically the active reflection of one self's and others actions serves as guidelines for future actions. This involves taking the role of the other, interpreting and understanding actions from another's perspective (ibid).

6 Results & Analysis

The presentation of the results and analysis below have been structured according to emergent themes. Each theme is explained with representative quotes, some shortened to include the most relevant concerning the conceptualisation of communication. Some quotes have multiple inferences and consequently have been used more than once.

6.1 Assumptions of communication

This section covers the interviewees way of talking about communication as a phenomenon. It answers the question of how ‘communication’ is conceptualised by presenting the most common metaphors that the interviewees used for describing ECC strategies and activities.

6.1.1 Making people do something

In these quotes ‘communication’ is described as making something happen in another individual.

#1 ‘Organic sales was quite low ... so we thought that here we might be able to have an influence by making people more aware [‘göra människor mer medvetna’] of what organic [products] actually is about ... just to make people understand [‘få folk åh förstå’] the difference between organic and non-organic’

Naturskyddsföreningen

Other utterances that indicated this were:

#2 ‘to have an impact on people directly [‘påverka människor direct’], ... partially about changing consumer behaviours ... that is to say we send people through [‘skickar folk igenom’] our communication on Facebook to our web’

Naturskyddsföreningen

#3 Interviewer: ‘What would you say are the greatest challenges from a communicative perspective?’

Greenpeace: ‘Well, it is probably to find this, button to push [‘hitta den här, knappen att trycka på’]’

#4 ‘When you invoke engagement [väcker engagemang] and make people assimilate [‘få människor att ta åt sig’] a campaign and do something with it, then it feels like I’ve done a good job ... you get that direct response’

Greenpeace

#5 ‘we wanted to have an open dialogue in order to put pressure on them’

Greenpeace

In #1 communication is theorized as ‘making people’ become something, have some sort of influence over them such as making them aware of something. In #2 communication on Facebook is seen as something that should have an impact, to direct people in a particular direction ‘send people through’. In #3 the underlying metaphors seems to be that the participant in communication has a hidden button, which if the communicator can find it will transform the participant to an open receiver for the desire of the communicator. The assumption is that the button is there, ready to be pushed, but hidden, and the challenge for the communicator is to find the button and push it. In #4 The first phrase indicates that communication is somewhat like a message that needs to find an active receiver that can ‘assimilate’ the campaign. However, the quote also suggests the receiver is unable to assimilate the campaign on their own, but it is up to the communicator to make people that cannot assimilate it on their own, to assimilate it. In #5 the use of ‘dialogue’ is coinciding with a tradition of ‘put pressure on’ which suggests dialogue which can be understood as a form of communication, is about persuasion or to make someone act in a particular way. Putting pressure on someone is a metaphor that also can be understood as making someone do something that they, without the influence of the communicator, would not do by themselves. The metaphor ‘making someone do’ something, indicates that communication is conceptualised as an act where a sender defines the meaning of the communicative situation by themselves, which is later sent to a receiver who is expected to act upon it accordingly, if the receiver does not act, the intent of the sender is not fulfilled.

6.1.2 Message transfer

These utterances conceptualise communication as transferring or spreading information.

#1 *‘In many places you establish quite a good contact with the local ICA dealer or the Konsum store, and then you simply put an information table in the store where you hand out brochures, perhaps set up five important products (organic) and talk a little bit about them with people ... what else do we do, well to simply spread the material’*

Naturskyddsförningen

The indication of message transfer were also indicated by utterances such as:

#2 *‘We also need to find very smart ways to get the knowledge out/ across[‘få ut kunskapen’]’*

Håll Sverige rent

#3 *‘they do not have enough information to understand’*

Jordens vänner

#4 Interviewer: *‘what would you say are the largest challenges from a communicative perspective?’*

Greenpeace: ‘... to try to find other stuff to do ... smart information campaigns, I wish we had the resources to do that’

Interviewer: ‘why is an information campaign good, do you think?’

Greenpeace: ‘because ... to give them enough information so that they themselves can act and talk to their friends and ...’

The first utterance (#1) conceptualise communication as informing participants, and opportunities to spread material. This is also reflected on in #2 to get the knowledge across. This is also mirrored in #3, where communication is thought of as to provide information in order to make the receivers aware of a topic which in turn will make them act. #4 also demonstrates how communication is viewed as a content which you can carry and bring ‘home’ to share with others. The common denominator for all these quotes in this category, are that communication is described getting information across. This indicates that communication is an activity of sending messages, and somehow make them get from A to

B or simply to 'spread' or 'hand' it out with the predefined intent of making people 'act' and spread it further through talking 'to their friends'.

6.1.3 Measuring communication

In these quotes communication is conceptualized as something that can be quantified, that can be either successful or unsuccessful. The connection to communication can be derived from asking the question 'how do you know that you have done a good job as a communicator?' and 'are there any other challenges you imagine, communicatively?'.

#1 'I look at reach-numbers for example and then I think, I feel contempt when we have ... are continually frequent in media so when we are in, the evening news or morning news'

Naturskyddsföreningen

Other utterances on this theme were:

#2 'one would like to be able to launch a TV ad or a Clearchannel campaign'

Håll Sverige Rent

#3 'with a little luck it is written about it in the general mass media too'

Jordens vänner

#4 '...so that is why of course, it is very important to get distribution, to get a front page on DN'

Håll Sverige Rent

#5 'It is comfortable with measurable goals of course ... but that does not mean that those more chaotic member driven initiatives are less successful, they might actually achieve more stuff, it is just that no one has defined how it should be measured'

Jordens vänner

In #1 the interviewee reflects upon how she knows she has done a good job as a communicator, in response communication seems to be valued in terms of how many people have been exposed to a message. Marketing techniques such as using ads (#2) are also associated with communication when the interviewee mentioned these as a nice to have in order to succeed, in relation to a question about the challenges of communication. To get coverage and exposure in mass media is considered successful communication in #3 and #4 (answering the 'good job' question). In #5 there is a recognition of others forms of communication that are not quantifiable. This kind of expression is found in a few of the interviewees talk concerning the purpose and goals of communication, predominantly however there is a pursuit for quantifiable goals. In this quote it becomes clear that quantifiable goals have a higher status than i.e. public dialogue and talk. Even though the interviewee in #5 acknowledges that interactions with people might share a value or even have a higher value than conventional communication activities. In summary this section demonstrates a description of communication where it is important to know how many people have been reached by a message. The desired situation is to find as effective channels as possible to increase exposure, i.e. through paid ads or commercials.

6.1.4 Creating legitimacy

Here communication is spoken of as an activity to gain legitimacy.

#1 'it also becomes another type of local anchoring, trustworthiness kind of when someone you understand lives in Vetlanda gives me a brochure. ... creates a direct contact, more confidence'

Naturskyddsföreningen

"2 'one can change if one notices that now they think we are out in shallow waters'

WWF

#3 'it is also important that, to me it is important that its meaningful otherwise one does not want to participate'

WWF

#4 'large organisations want more and more to show up their, their environmental awareness to strengthen their own brand, then we for example have the collaboration with the armed forces, they have seen that we can empower them and they empower us as well, it is a lot about branding and to be visible, about communication'

Håll Sverige Rent

In utterance #1 the interviewee was asked what motivates the choice to inform people in stores locally. Communication becomes a matter of creating trust for the organization by having local members talk to local people. Implicitly this means the interviewee value that communication is taking place between people that have a relationship with each other. In #2 on the other hand, the purpose seems to be to communicate in order to avoid getting ship wrecked in 'shallow waters', one reads the reactions of the audience in order to be able to avoid and handle critique, to gain legitimacy in order to be able to convince people with a message. In #3 the mentioning of meaning is interesting, the purpose of communication is to be meaningful, that is what causes someone to participate. In #4 communication is theorized as branding, creating a visible identity, implicitly suggesting that communication is theorized as a sort of tool for increasing legitimacy.

Taken together, these metaphors suggests communication is a matter of gaining trust in order to get people to participate and listen to the message (i.e. the brochure) the organisation wants to send.

6.1.5 Right & wrong

In these utterances communication is defined as a matter of meeting predefined goals, which indicate that communication can be right or wrong in relation to a specific outcome.

#1 'when it comes to communication one preferably wants to have goals that make our work measurable, have we as a department kind of contributed in the right way?'

Naturskyddsforeningen

#2 'Of course we try to put up goals so that we can measure, ... you are not always sure you are measuring the right thing'

WWF

#3 'That is what internet is good for, to sort of find the right message for the right person'

Jordens vänner

It seems in #1 that messages in campaigns are designed with a limited amount of options for feedback, based upon a probability of a predefined response, as the interviewee uses a metaphor like 'contributed in the right way', leading one to expect there is also a wrong way, that is not intended by the sender. In #2 it is naturally assumed ('of course') that one should measure the 'right thing' which indicates communication efforts can be conceptualised as being right or wrong, successful or unsuccessful. The 'right' thing in #2 is to measure the feedback received in relation to the original message/ intention of the message conceptualized by the sender. Quote #3 signals a worry about getting stuck in an information overflow, to find 'the right message' indicates communication is/ contains an idea that the senders want to transfer to the receiver.

6.1.6 Information/ communication

These utterances suggest that the distinction between 'information' and 'communication' are not explicitly clear, rather both concepts are used interchangeably.

#1 'We have our base consumer information, there is an app called "green guide", and we work a lot with different types of consumer advice ... the problem is that too few are purchasing (organic products) and how can we make them purchase, well it might be that we with our sort of, more communication in one area, might make people change sort of, become more aware or change their thoughts ... So in a way, focusing where we think it is needed more, more actively and more in a way, consumer communication on a particular matter, that is needed I think'

Naturskyddsföreningen

#2 'we need to find the heart in everything we do, then we need those stories from out in the field, and people and destinies, and yeah, those kind of things, so we work very much with finding it and transforming it, so that it does not become you know, it can easily be that as a nature conservation organisation one becomes sort of technical, nature conservation information ... so it is our greatest mission actually, creating engagement'

WWF

#3 'communication activities are determined on the premises of, from an idea about how much you can talk to people before they tire, how many newsletters and so on can you send?'

Håll Sverige Rent

In #1 information and communication are used to describe communication activities in a campaign, what is first consumer information is rephrased as consumer communication. The subtle distinguisher seems to be that 'information' is used to describe the message while 'communication' is used as an umbrella term for the whole process of sending and getting a response. In #2 the interviewee implies that stories needs to be transformed from 'information about something' to 'communication'. Implicitly the interviewee seems to assign a lower value to 'information', transforming it, so that it does not become ... information'. The way to increase its value is to put it in a context where it becomes more interesting, it becomes 'engagement', which has previously been associated with a definition of communication, that has a higher status. In #3 it seems 'to talk with' is equated with informing, suggesting talking and informing (sending newsletters) are the same. It is also interesting to look at how the receiver is characterized, as someone who might become fed up with too much information and tire, communication is hence theorized as a matter of content, an amount that can become excessive.

6.1.7 Communication as commodity delivery

In these quotes communication is thought of as a package or commodity to be delivered.

#1 'Like our film for example, that was probably the most important tool the first year, that we did this movie that got quite large reach and that we spread the article "five important products to change to organic", that kind of communication, that are different types of communication efforts that we tried to spread'

Naturskyddsföreningen

Here follows a summary of other interesting theorizations:

#2 'gather up the communication so that it becomes clearer in our channels'

Naturskyddsföreningen

#3 'that (nature conservation information) can become very communicative'

WWF

#4 'When we have a kit we are jointly satisfied with, we usually go for it'

WWF

#5 'The environmentally friendly week which is a campaign we run every year in September that is filled with different content depending on what we focus on'

Naturskyddsföreningen

In #1 communication is equated with an effort that can be ‘spread’, indicating communication is an act that can be shared, or an artefact that can be distributed. In #2 this view is reinforced, where communication is defined as a collection of content/ activities to be broadcasted in their channels, similar to a collection of goods to be distributed to various receivers. To make something communicative, in #3, implies that communication is something that can be packaged, as something to be transported. Also referred to as the construction of a ‘kit’ in #4 and filling communication activities with content in #5. In summary, communication in this category is seen as a kind of transport medium, a vessel that shall deliver a message.

6.1.8 Getting through the noise

Here communication is conceptualised as sending a message through a continuum of noise.

#1 Interviewer: ‘How would you like a campaign to look like communicatively? ... let me rephrase, how do you not want it to look like?’

Naturskyddsforeningen: ‘We do not want to drown, we always run a risk of, this balance between reactive and proactive and our diversity of questions makes it hard to focus, thus the risk for all focused approaches that is being made in this type of organisation is that one drowns in oneself, that is you put down a lot of time but then you do not really rise above the noise’

#2 Interviewer: ‘is there anything with communication you find tricky or challenging?’

Håll Sverige Rent: ‘Yes, to reach out you know, its once again the noise in some way, and the frequency, ... it is sometimes hard to keep up that frequency’

#3 ‘How do you know that you have succeeded? ... then you sort of know you have reached through’

Naturskyddsforeningen

#4 ‘Does one have the energy assimilate one more thing? So basically, competition for attention due to the communication overflow, I believe that is the single largest challenge’

WWF

#5 ‘to reach through the noise, this is how we distinguish ourselves, how do we reach through so that they see just our message?’

Greenpeace

In #1 the interviewee speaks about rising ‘above the noise’ in order not to drown, to bridge the ‘noise gap’ and get the message across to the other end with as little distortion as possible to allow proper decoding. There is also the idea of focus, which can be interpreted as a contrast to sending an unfocused/ or distorted message. In order to break through the noise the interviewee in #2 speaks about keeping up the frequency probably to get high exposure. Exposure and frequency were utterances used by all interviewees in speaking about challenges, in order to ‘reach through’ (#3) or get across. Drawing from that, one reason to keep up frequency might be as the interviewee in #4 says, to deal with information overflow. Transmitting more messages probably increases the likelihood of them being received, this interpretation is validated in #5 where the interviewee speaks about the competition for attention.

6.1.9 Dialogue

In these utterances communication activities are assumed to include a concept of dialogue.

#1 'one can, have a dialogue, one can change if one notices that now they think we are out in shallow waters'

WWF

#2 'one reaches so much further by having a dialogue when the target group feels seen and heard'

WWF

#3 'we wanted to have an open dialogue in order to put pressure on them'

Greenpeace

#4 'something happens during the weekend and we have to swing over to Y instead, so it is a continual dialogue that we have, reactively, proactively'

Naturskyddsföreningen

#5 'we often pose questions to hear what people think about things, so that is what I mean with dialogue to try to, that one feels that we, we are here'

WWF

In #1 communication activities are connected to the concept of dialogue. Furthermore, one has a dialogue in order to avoid critique, which suggests dialogue is seen as a tool for receiving feedback to be able to alter what one says. This idea is backed up in #2 where one speaks of 'reaching so much further' through dialogue, which indicates it is about sending a message that is based on what the receivers find important so they feel 'seen and heard'. In quotes #3 and #4 communication is conceptualised as using dialogue to put pressure on or respond proactively to the environment, indicating a tradition of persuasion through getting to know the crowd. Dialogue is also represented (#5) as an open listening, to be present with someone. Generally speaking, communication activities in ECCs are depicted here as a dialogue between two parties. In most utterances mostly as a means to convey a particular understanding, or to deliver a point of view, or to persuade someone into thinking or acting in a particular manner, from this one can draw that the concept of dialogue as a communicative metaphor, is understood in majority as having a predisposed meaning, defined by the sender.

6.2 Relationships in communication

6.2.1 Passive receivers

In these utterances the interviewees speak of the participants of communication, attributing them sort of a passive role in relation to the message they want to send.

#1 'people are very interested in being guided'

Naturskyddsföreningen

#2 'there are theories of how people just "turn off"'

WWF

#3 '17year old guys are really hard to reach in with our issue ... so perhaps we should just accept that one cannot reach them and process them before they turn 17'

Håll Sverige Rent

In #1 the interviewee view their role as established, they are there to provide relevant information about something and guide participants in a certain direction, this addresses them as passive in relation to the information they want to share. In #2 this interpretation is reinforced by another interviewee who conceptualises others as either on or 'off' in relation to being able to receive a message. In the third utterance #3 communication is theorized as a fixed message that should reach someone. Conceptualising people as 'hard to reach' might imply a loss or fragmentation of the message due to a discrepancy in language.

Phrasing people, in this case 17year old guys, as ‘hard to reach’ puts them in a fixed position, and suggests they are passive in relation to a message.

6.2.2 Feedback system

Here communication is referred to as a matter of receiving feedback from the participants.

#1 ‘so there we felt that we had a strong case to build our communication upon because it was something that people wanted to know, so there we felt like, that will be the foundation for our communication ... We want to help people in making good every-day choices’

Naturskyddsföreningen

#2 ‘one can change if one notices that now they think we are out in shallow waters’

WWF

#3 ‘we often pose questions to hear what people think about things, so that is what I mean with dialogue to try to, that one feels that we, we are here to, and sometimes we open up chats with our nature conservationists directly to provide an opportunity to pose questions directly’

WWF

#4 ‘we are a member driven organisation that also should do what our member expects and wants from us, ... it has to be a pragmatic balancing between what society needs, what do we want, what does our members want, what engages the members ... So one week when we have planned theme X, something happens during the weekend and we have to swing over to Y instead, so it is a continual dialogue that we have, reactively, proactively’

Naturskyddsföreningen

#5 ‘this operation has such an incredible amount of contacts every month, so it is (intelligence) a good way of hearing how the talk goes in Sweden, out on the street and in the homes when it comes to our issues’

Naturskyddsföreningen

#6 ‘make the cities to take ownership of this, one way of doing it was to speak to people, living in the municipality, and make them express what they think about their city’

WWF

In #1 communication is seen as a delivery of something that people request in order to make their life work fluently when they make everyday choices. Similar to this, quote #2 describes an interaction with the people engaged in social media, responding to the needs of the other and adapting one’s way of presenting one self and using the public as a reference group for action. The interviewee reads the participants reactions and adapts to that in order to avoid critique. Quote #3 provides a definition of communication as ‘dialogue’, which hints at the importance of symmetry in communication, as a mutual activity, either through contributing with a presence, ‘to be here’. There seems to be an idea here that communication is about a reciprocal activity where one needs to listen and be open to the participants concerns. But it could also be interpreted as a Q&A activity, communication as a platform for providing answers. This interpretation is endorsed in #4 and #5 where communication is described as a response to what is happening in society, implicitly a complex web of feedback mechanisms ‘something happens during the weekend and we have to swing over to...’. In #6 communication is about offering a possibility to take ownership of a situation, which implies an active component, the use of ‘make’ also implies that communication is to do something, and this doing is provoked through communication.

6.2.3 Learning from others

This category summarizes how practitioners learn about campaign design by looking at others.

#1 'you do not learn how to do this specific task, but there comes new social media, new channels ... can we be present in the cell-phones in another way than today? It is exciting, I mean how can we keep up with it you know, sometimes it feels like we are always somewhat behind and are trying to catch up ... when another organisation goes like "have you started with snapchat?"', and one goes to work the next day and says "hey we must start with snapchat"'

Greenpeace

#2 'How do you know that you have succeeded? One very evident way is when you see others picking up the hashtags we use, the tags you use or that one copies our rhetoric or so ... then you sort of know you have reached through'

Naturskyddsföreningen

#3 'Well its quite well known that children affect quite a lot what we purchase for our household'

Naturskyddsföreningen

#4 'It is easy to get carried away in any random direction, but generally I hope that... We have to take other measures than they do (other NGOs) because we do not have the possibility to handle it the way they do, they have more resources than us put simply'

Jordens vänner

#1 Here ECC design is based on the current know-how of how communication should be pursued. As a response to the present fashion trends of what communication is, a process involving looking at what others do and stops doing when it becomes 'old'. A similar expression is made in #2 where success is described as seeing other organisations (like themselves) pick up hashtags (twitter). In #3 the choice to design activities for children is based on what is referred to as common knowledge. Quote #4 offers an interesting take on design choices, it is clear that one compares ones' own strategy to other organisations within the same sphere (other NGOs), and the strategies seem to become negotiated based on creativity due to limitations of resources, communication planning hence becomes sort of like an art form.

7 Discussion

Assumptions about reality is what guides how we interpret, plan and act upon reality. One way of looking at assumptions is through language use, in a way the words we use make visible and limits our understanding. Looking at language we become aware of ourselves and the cultural, structural and perhaps psychological factors that motives particular views and perceptions about reality. In this thesis I have investigated how communication is defined, through communicating with practitioners of ECCs. It was my assumption that looking at the respondents' ways of speaking of communication would tell me something about the practises they are part of, referring here to a larger context, a context defining a view on communication itself, belonging to a particular school of thought.

7.1 RQ1: How is 'communication' conceptualised in the design and execution of Environmental Communication Campaigns?

Communication is theorized as making something happen in another individual, either through persuasive messages, 'make people understand' or 'put pressure on' individuals, through 'educating' people and finding the right 'button to push'. The commons of these metaphors are that they treat communication as transmission of messages, which we recognize in the theoretical framework called transmission as they indicate communication is about sending messages in order to receive a preconceived response or feedback in the other individual, for instance there is a 'right and wrong' to communication as well as being successful. The response defines the potency of the medium used to send the message and how it handled any potential noise. My argument for the transmission model is reinforced where the interviewees speaks about communication as sending information or knowledge in order to 'get something across', preferably with a measureable impact, which is read by looking at things such as 'reach-numbers', or getting 'a front page' on local news media. Phrases such as 'put pressure on' also fits into a transmission view, where the sender wants to get a predefined response which is decided by the sender, generally the transmission model implies that the receivers are limited in the amount of choices they have and report back on, not responding as expected would mean a loss or fragmentation of the message has taken place. The phrase 'find this, button to push' is a machine metaphor for human beings, and communication become the interaction between machine operator and the machine, perhaps an interpretation inherited from a classic transmission view on communication, given its mechanical history. The purpose in a transmission context would be to have the sender initiate a process and receive a particular kind of outcome, in this case hitting the button that will trigger the desired action. Communication is also viewed as a process of gaining legitimacy. The interviewees speak of 'trustworthiness' and the importance of making something 'meaningful' in order for people to participate, as well as strengthening brands. Creating trust in order to increase 'reach numbers' seems like a means for persuasion which would put these kind of utterances in a transmission context, however, not uttered explicitly, the assumptions of communication here is that participants

would listen more closely if they feel close to the organisations values, that they find what they say ‘meaningful’ enough. This implies that the participants are actively making sense of the organisation, which goes beyond the passive stance of receivers that the transmission view offers. For instance by talking about ‘local anchoring’ in relation to ‘someone you understand lives in Vetlanda’ is an acknowledgement that might fit with a SI perspective, that people within an individuals’ intimate reference group are more likely to define the actions of that individual because it is someone they can relate to and define as belonging to a collective ‘I’, in contrast to say a sense of ‘other’. This line of thinking is encouraged when the interviewees speak about creating ‘meaningful’ communication which implies a mutual activity between participants of communication, still though the foundation for creating meaning is to have participants engage in a predefined way, bringing us back to an idea of transmission: Overall it is important to point out that these ideas are not spoken of clearly, but it could indicate that an SI view co-exists partially with the transmission view in this regard.

In referring to communication as a package of content, the interviewees define ECCs as a distribution of a neatly packaged ‘kit’ of information or communication as a vessel containing goods (messages). This reminds me of the picture of a freight train, communication as an infrastructure for transporting an artefact from point A to B.

Another interesting aspect of communication is found in the utterances about noise. In the transmission tradition noise is considered a factor which potentially distorts the message, fragmenting it so it cannot be decoded by the receiver. The utterances that suggests this view is apparent in ECCs are expressed as ‘rise above the noise’, to ‘know you have reached through’ which indicates getting past something on the way and ‘we do not want to drown’ which suggests there are factors between the sender and receiver that potentially might disrupt the message.

In other utterances interviewees uses information and communication interchangeably. Mixing them might hide properties for observation in ECCs. It might seem like a common and negligible mistake, reading between the lines however, this could indicate a rather loose and unclear definition of what communication really constitutes, what distinguishes it from information. A clearer idea of what communication could mean, what forms it might take might provide new insights into what elements of ECC are available in different activities, and hence what properties are possible to study. A similar interpretation can be made about the conceptualization of communication as a distribution of content, where interviewees spoke of ‘gathering up communication’ and making information communicative.

Finally is an interesting concept of ‘dialogue’, where communication is described as something to do with being proactive, as a form of feedback, but also to allow individuals to actively involve themselves and share a voice. Although persuasion is also mentioned, there are influences suggesting communication is more than a typical sender/ receiver situation, since the ‘receiver’ is seen as having agency of their own, as well as needs and desires which the NGO wants to create an opening for. In relation to this is also a desire to make people do something, an action defined by the ‘sender’ which leads one to think the transmission view is coinciding with an idea of dialogue in this section.

7.2 RQ2: How is the relation described between the participants in Environmental Communication Campaigns?

The relationships in communicative situations can be implicitly read as a distinction between senders and receivers. Utterances suggesting people want to be ‘guided’ implies that participants of communication are passive in relation to how they carry out certain things. Same goes for viewing individuals as ‘hard to reach’ or when they speak of how people can ‘turn off’. One can draw synergies from this to the mechanical origins of the transmission view, in where one would speak of actual machines with on and off buttons, if

the receiver or phone is not 'online' one could not get through with the message. The problem described here is to get in touch with the person, as communication is not happening face to face, communication is automatically assumed to take on mechanical properties, as message transfer.

In the analysis are also a number of utterances that shows how the relationship between eNGOs and the public is conceptualised as a capricious feedback system. Value is put upon the 'other' or 'receiver' as being active in the process of communication, however mainly as references for understanding how to design messages and persuade. To 'help people' on their way to making good choices could suggest a reciprocal definition of communication. The references to feedback loops suggests a transmission based assumption of how communication works. One of the interviewees mentioned that people wants to be guided, suggesting their own role is an established source of information. Such an utterance makes a clear distinction I argue between a sender and a receiver, the sender creates the meaning of a message which is to be sent and acted upon by the receiver.

Knowledge about design is another interesting topic for reviewing relationships. It seems the NGOs, although quite different in terms of focus, share a similar interest to look at one another and compare their communication activities, successes and failures with each other. One of the interviewee expresses quite explicitly how other eNGOs like to copy/ borrow their hashtags and ideas such as using snapchat for their own campaign designs, this suggests an informal network which functions as a 'measuring stick' for validating knowledge about campaign planning, if something is done by either a sister organisation abroad, or another eNGO in Sweden or abroad that is immediately brought to attention as a reference group, hence the construction of knowledge is based on an informal habit of comparing suggesting an informal network of practise.

7.3 A new perspective

Just for the record, I do not intend to put forth an idea that there is a right and wrong to communication. Simply that there might be different levels of understanding, depending on how you view something and that concepts are abstracts of reality rather than a complete picture. Just as human awareness can be directed at different things, one can view conceptualisation as a tool for evaluating what an object is, looking at a cup in one way might make you aware of its form, handle and shape, whilst another level of awareness reveals its colour, how light reflects off its surface, the shadows, the sense of temperature of what is inside etc. In the below section I attempt to approach communication from another point of departure, since there is a tendency to speak of communication by using metaphors which are similar to an interpretation of communication as transmission, I thought It would be interesting to discuss what could be revealed by changing perspective to a social constructivist approach such as SI.

Contrasting the transmission view, SI reveals other aspects of what the participants do in communicative situations, namely that they actively define and make sense of actions in the present interaction. Putting an emphasis on that, one could study how actions are created through interaction and how identities are formed. According to an SI view, the dynamic nature of interaction and definition is lost on the printed page (Charon, 2009), meaning we cannot really study how identities are formed if we do not turn to real social interactions. In relating to conceptualisations of communication in ECCs, there is an emphasis on message construction, which does not account for how social interactions in dialogical situations shape participants' definitions of what is going on in the campaigns. The emphasis on messages also affect how the challenges are conceptualised, in this study the interviewees keep coming back to the problem of 'getting the message across', 'breaking through the noise' barrier and finding the perfect message are vital parts in campaign communication, which are views clearly originating from a transmission perspective. The SI perspective views individuals as progressions rather than models of cause and effect, so instead of

focusing on single variables, such as noise or message, as cause for human action, using a SI approach could mean a study of the processes and strings of developing factors. In order to study such a process one must view communication as an interaction and observe the emerging elements. This indicates a shift in attention, from a pursuit of trying to determine individual properties of human behaviour to the study of processes, actions as they dynamically unfold in actual interactions, this is indeed a topic for the social sciences studying social advocacy/ campaign-work, to re-envision campaign communication as complex, dynamic and alive for that matter. In this context turning the attention to the elements that enables participants of communication to define their situation, in another sense moving away from the reductionist study of human cognition to a wider sociocultural view.

In contrast to conceptualising a 'right' and 'wrong' aspect of communication, a SI perspective might shed light on how meaning is made intersubjective through continuous action and interpretation, revealing a potential for a dynamic responsiveness to the participants understanding of communicative situations. The interviewees do assert a special value to human interaction in their pursuit of 'face to face' dialogue, i.e. through providing opportunities for participants to 'express concerns' either in local shops, on websites or in interaction on social media, but generally the purpose is characterised by words such as 'to reach through' suggesting a transmission view. The transmission view does not account for the meaning making that takes place actively during the interaction between the participants of communication. This also does not explain or gives room for discussion about how the participants make sense of communication. The reason I stress this is because many interviewees (although just one quoted) holds an idea of target groups which are 'hard to reach'. In making this interpretation, the roles and rules of engagement becomes predetermined, where the sender has a specific message that they want to send to a receiver who needs to be able to decode that message. If the receiver is conceptualised (as in this case) 'hard to reach' the interviewee goes on to make the interpretation that these groups are not participants of communication, since they don't respond in the desired manner. In doing so the interviewee constructs an invisible agreement between themselves (the eNGO) and those participants such as 'we do not understand each other' and uses that as a validation for not wasting resources on trying to connect to them. The choice not to target these groups seems to come as a relief for the complexities of understanding these kind of participants. From an SI standpoint the problem matter would be of understanding how participants make sense of what the organisations say, and how they actively define their actions based on present interactions.

In the general sense of speaking about campaign communication, participants are addressed as receivers of information and/ or communication, this puts eNGOs in a slightly elevated position in relation to who is formulating the meaning in any communicative situation, this might be hiding the voices of the participants and important aspects for analysis in communicative situations. In contrast to this, several interviewees also mention an interest in listening to and understanding participants in order to survive as a movement, it is however mainly described on a conceptual level as trying to adapt to and understand the media landscape, and less about trying to unfold a potential for mutual meaning making in actual interactions. There seems to be an interesting area attempt to interpret the relationship between the eNGOs and the participants in communication activities, i.e. how participants are affected by a potential power imbalance in relation to constructing meaning and voice in communicative situations.

In framing communication as an educational activity the communicators interprets the meaning of communication as something they construct rather than as a shared activity taking place through interaction where it would be dynamically co-constructed as the participants make their own interpretations and contributions to the communicative situations. In one sense this somewhat hides the fact of contextual sensitivity in relation to what determines the participants' actions in relation to communication. Education can certainly also be seen as a dynamic process and its somewhat up to interpretation what is

actually being referred to here, but descriptions as ‘creating awareness’, ‘direct influence’ and ‘making them know’ could be interpreted as less dynamic and more about having an information flow going. In contrast we also see communication theorized as creating debate, this suggests something more dynamic, more in line with interaction.

The transmission view does not account for the value or importance of the active participation embedded in the interactions between the eNGOs and the public, hence one cannot determine the levels of (a)symmetry emerging from the interactions in dialogical settings. The transmission view further conceptualizes the audience/ target group as receivers and not active participants, which fails to denote for the value added by their active contribution to the communicative situation. In describing the goals of communication practises, most eNGOs conceptualized successful work as getting a message across and getting people to act in according with the message they try to send. Not getting an appropriate response would hence be seen as a failure. I argue that the practitioners of campaign planning and implementation, regardless of whether the message is acted upon accordingly, are part of a social interaction with the public, and that they can come to understand their contributions to the communicative situations better if they acknowledge the view that communications cannot happen in isolation, rather that they are part of a mutual meaning making and social interaction, which would acknowledge the meaning of shared contribution to the communicative situations, instead of just reviewing a particular message and the level of noise hindering the publics means for decoding them.

7.4 Reflecting back on the introduction

Previous studies of ECCs have looked into how to create effective campaigns. By contrast, this study examines how the practitioners of ECC make sense of communication as a phenomenon. This paper provides an opening for reflection upon how meta-discursive conceptualisations either enables or hides properties for observation in ECCs. These properties might provide insight into how participants make sense of each other in ECCs. For instance, by viewing meaning as being co-created in dialogical situations, one could further theorize and understand what conditions give rise to action, as well as reflect upon how the participants are actively making sense of themselves and others. These are areas that cannot be interpreted or understood if one presupposes a transmission view on communication.

7.5 Implications for future studies

This study assumes that studying meta-discourse can reveal how communication is conceptualised by individuals involved in the design and execution of campaigns. Hence the results are tied to concepts revealed through talking about communication activities rather than observing them in action. To get a full picture of how communication is conceptualised one would also need to review how ECCs is actually carried out. By doing so one might find additional definitions of communication that were not revealed in their talk about ECCs.

This paper suggests that bringing in alternative definitions of communication as a concept might bring a value to the study of how meaning is negotiated in real-life communication situations. The findings of this study makes it worth considering how other views on communication can be integrated into the transmission paradigm. The question is how can other interpretations of communication become of practical value for practitioners within the field of ECC planning? How can insights brought from other perspectives be applied to ECC planning?

8 Conclusions

1. In speaking about communication, practitioners of ECC use metaphors that resemble a definition of communication as transmission of messages. This is expressed through utterances such as 'to make someone do', 'find this button to push', 'rise above the noise'.
2. In describing relationships between participants of communication in ECCs, practitioners use metaphors that distinguish a sender and a receiver of communication. Participants of ECCs are referred to by expressions such as wanting to be 'guided', being part of a feedback system and as if operating machinery i.e. 'find this, button to push'.
3. Practitioners of ECCs share a common interest to study others within the same field. This is one way of learning how ECCs should be planned in order to be successful. This suggests the knowledge about ECCs is co-constructed through an active exchange of ideas and practises.
4. In contrasting the concepts used by practitioners with Symbolic Interactionism (SI), other properties of communication are revealed. Bringing in a SI view on communication shifts the attention from studying *receivers* of communication as passive. Rather it provides an opportunity to interpret participants as being dynamically unfolding processes. Furthermore, the transmission perspective would not consider communication to take place if the message has not reached its receiver. From a SI view however, the participants are indeed part of communication, making interpretations and actively defining even situations where they choose not to 'assimilate' a message.
5. The professional field of ECCs relies mainly on a transmission view. This view is unsuited for describing how participants actively make sense of interactions. SI on the other hand might reveal how participants are actively contributing value to the situation by their own definition. Applying such a view opens up new areas for studying what is actually happening when communicating in ECCs.

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Appendix 1

Interview Guide in original language

Bakgrund

- Utbildning/ erfarenhet av kommunikation?
- Hur länge arbetet för X? Nuvarande titel?

Kampanjer

- Berätta om en kampanj ni nyligen genomfört? (praktik)
 - Varför gjorde ni aktivitet Y (sociala medier/ utställning/ tävling osv)
 - Kreativitet/ magkänsla
 - Utgångspunkter? (teori/ erfarenhet)
- Hur gick det till när ni fattade beslut?
- Berätta om processen för hur en kampanj planeras? (moral/ modell/ idé)
 - Syfte, Steg för steg/ från start till finish ("varför gör man så"?)
 - Vilka delar ingår i en kampanj? (digitalt, tryckt, events etc.)

Utmaningar

- Vad ser du som de största utmaningarna ni möter ur ett kommunikationsperspektiv?
 - Hur hanterar ni dessa?
- Hur vet du om att du gjort ett bra jobb?
 - Vad hoppas ni åstadkomma kort-/långsiktigt med en kampanj?

Målsättningar/Framtiden/ Drömmen

- Hur skulle ditt dröm kommunikationsprojekt se ut?
- Hur vill du att den inte ska se ut?

Kompletterande

- Vad innebär kommunikation i en miljökampanj?
- Vad är en kommunikationsaktivitet tänker du?
 - Hur ser den ut?